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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 05, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 05, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

CUMHURIYET / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: An investigation has been undertaken against 675 people who signed a "Call for Peace Declaration" in Eruh district of Siirt last year on November 27, a date which also marks the date the terrorist organization PKK engaged in armed actions for the first time. (Note: That was in 1984). Three hundred fifty people, including members of NGOs, political organizations, mayors and municipality assembly members from Diyarbakir gave their statements at the Office of the Security Director in Diyarbakir yesterday.

RADIKAL / CUMHURIYET / EVRENSEL: Bekir Kaya, one of the attorneys for jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, was detained and later released by the Gemlik Jandarma Command in Bursa upon an order by the Istanbul 11th Heavy Criminal Court. (Note: Kaya had earlier been called to the Istanbul court to make a statement there and had not appeared.) Meanwhile, Hatice Korkut and Feridun Celik (former Diyarbakir mayor), also attorneys for Abdullah Ocalan, paid their weekly visits to Ocalan.

CUMHURIYET: According to results of a study, 20,000 children work in the streets of Diyarbakir and 600 children live in the streets there. The Children's Rights Center of the Diyarbakir Bar Association stated that these children, lacking love and protection, are highly vulnerable to addictions, involvement by criminal networks in crime, and child prostitution and sexual abuse.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Turkish Armed Forces reportedly started a military operation in the area of the Hani, Lice and Dicle districts of Diyarbakir. Reportedly 4,000 soldiers and an unspecified number of village guards are deployed in the area.

EVRENSEL: The petroleum that leaked from Batman-Yumurtalik Pipeline (see press sum 4/18) to the Ataturk Dam has made its way to the shores of Samsat district in Adiyaman, where it is disturbing the local population, which is concerned about the quality of their potable water.

EVRENSEL: Truckers and transporters launched a nationwide strike to draw the government's attention to the problems of truckers. Truckers demand a decrease in the diesel oil prices, an increase in transportation fees, and an end to companies' demands that they overload their vehicles.

ZAMAN / RADIKAL / YENI SAFAK: Pursuant to intelligence obtained about several bomb incidents allegedly being planned by the PKK, a woman (reportedly a runner) was caught with 1.5 kilograms of C-4 explosives on her body in front of the Office of the Security Director in Diyarbakir. Separately, the security forces raided a terrorists' cell in Istanbul, arrested two PKK members and found 7.5 kilograms of plastic explosives.

BOLGE: DYP (True Path Party) Adana Provincial Chairperson Nevzat Saskin is quoted as saying that AKP (Justice and Development Party) has lost its credibility in the eyes of the public and will not be able to fare well in 2006.

BOLGE / EKSPRES: A heavy hailstorm that struck Yumurtalik district of Adana damaged produce in cotton, watermelon, and apricot fields belonging to 20 different farmers.

EKSPRES: It was a "cold shower" for the victims of Adana's June 1998 earthquake when the General Directorate of Disaster Relief ordered them to repay the total amount of money granted as a loan to them. The victims were surprised upon hearing that their liability had become effective in 2001; they claim no state authority had sent notice before that date to them regarding any repayment.

SABAH (GUNEY): Twenty-seven German teachers arrived in Adana and paid visits to various primary schools. The group's aim was to learn more about the Turkish education system and its policies. Some German teachers reportedly asked school directors about the headscarf issue, corporeal punishment, and the status of non-Muslim students with regard to religious instruction in classes.

RADIKAL / ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM / YENI SAFAK: Former PKK militants, who in years past reportedly confessed to membership in PKK and then operated on behalf JITEM (Jandarma Intelligence Center), were arrested by police in Istanbul as they tried to extort money from DEHAP Istanbul administrators.

RADIKAL: Relatives including the brother-in-law and father-in-law of a 15-year-old girl, who had attempted to cut the girl's nose off of her face, were released by a Duty Prosecutor on March 11 after being charged with a crime classified as "minor wounding." (Note: Despite the use of the terms "brother-in-law" and "father-in-law" in the news report, the girl is under the legal age required for marriage in Turkey. End note.) The men were arrested again only after Remziye Tanrikulu, attorney and member of the Human Rights Center of the Diyarbakir Bar Association, appealed to the Court.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. EVRENSEL: A Gaziantep University study revealed that Gaziantep province's unemployment figures were higher than the nationwide average. The study says Gaziantep has a 20.3 percent unemployment rate whereas the nationwide unemployment figure is reported to be as 13.8.

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